

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of executing an event in an interactive television system, the method comprising:

5 associating a function with a location in an environment of the interactive television system; and

in response to a selection of the function, enabling an event associated with the function.

10 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the function includes at least one feature associated with the location.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein enabling the event comprises:

15 selecting one of the features to execute an application associated with the feature.

4. The method of claim 2 wherein enabling the event comprises:

20 selecting one of the features to provide information associated with the feature.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

25 requiring verification input if the location is a restricted location.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein prior to enabling the event, determining if the function has an active status.

5 7. The method of claim 2, further comprising:
customizing a feature in one of the functions.

8. The method of claim 2, further comprising:
setting the feature in one of active state or inactive
10 state.

9. The method of claim 2 wherein additional video is displayed with a representation of the feature or function.

15 10. The method of claim 2 wherein additional text is displayed with a representation of the feature or function.

11. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
creating a personal room function associated with a
20 restricted-access location in the environment of the interactive television system.

12. The method of claim 11, further comprising:
activating at least one feature associated with the
25 personal room function.

13. An article of manufacture, comprising:

a machine-readable medium having stored thereon
instructions to:

5 associate a function with a location in an environment of
the interactive television system; and

in response to a selection of the function, enable an
event associated with the function.

10 14. An apparatus for executing an event in an interactive
television system, the apparatus comprising:

means for associating a function with a location in an
environment of the interactive television system; and

15 communicatively coupled to the associating means, means
for enabling an event associated with the function, in
response to a selection of the function.

15. A method of organizing information in an interactive
television system, the method comprising:

20 displaying a function that is associated with a location
in an environment of the interactive television system; and

in response to a selection of the function, enabling an
event associated with the function.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein the function includes at least one feature associated with the location.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein enabling the event

5 comprises:

selecting one of the features to execute an application associated with the feature.

18. The method of claim 16 wherein enabling the event

10 comprises:

selecting one of the features to provide information associated with the feature.

19. The method of claim 15, further comprising:

15 requiring verification input if the location is a restricted location.

20. The method of claim 15 wherein prior to enabling the event, determining if the function has an active status.

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21. The method of claim 16, further comprising:

customizing a feature in one of the functions.

22. The method of claim 16, further comprising:

setting the feature in one of active state or inactive state.

23. The method of claim 16 wherein additional video is
5 displayed with a representation of the feature or function.

24. The method of claim 16 wherein additional text is displayed with a representation of the feature or function.

10 25. The method of claim 15, further comprising:
creating a personal function associated with a restricted-access location in the environment of the interactive television system.

15 26. The method of claim 25, further comprising:
activating at least one feature associated with the personal function.

27. An article of manufacture, comprising:
20 a machine-readable medium having stored thereon instructions to:
associate a function with a location in an environment of the interactive television system; and
in response to a selection of the function, enable an
25 event associated with the function.

28. An apparatus for executing an event in an interactive television system, the apparatus comprising:

means for associating a function with a location in an
5 environment of the interactive television system; and
communicatively coupled to the associating means, means
for enabling an event associated with the function, in
response to a selection of the function.

10 29. A method of organizing information in an interactive television system, the method comprising:

selecting a settings menu that includes at least one
function corresponding to a location in an environment of the
interactive television system;

15 selecting one of the functions in the settings menu;
if the selected function corresponds to a personalized
location, then requiring a verification input, and if the
verification input is valid, then permitting a feature in the
selected function to be activated;

20 if the selected function does not correspond to a
personalized location, then permitting a feature in the
selected function to be activated; and

if the activated feature is a customizable feature, then
permitting input of a name for the activated feature and a

directory path to an application associated with the activated feature.

30. An article of manufacture, comprising:

5 a machine-readable medium having stored thereon instructions to:

select a settings menu that includes at least one function corresponding to a location in an environment of the interactive television system;

10 select one of the functions in the settings menu;

if the selected function corresponds to a personalized location, then require a verification input, and if the verification input is valid, then permit a feature in the selected function to be activated;

15 if the selected function does not correspond to a personalized location, then permit a feature in the selected function to be activated; and

if the activated feature is a customizable feature, then permit input of a name for the activated feature and a

20 directory path to an application associated with the activated feature.

31. An apparatus for organizing information in an interactive television system, the apparatus comprising:

means for selecting a settings menu that includes at least one function corresponding to a location in an environment of the interactive television system;

communicatively coupled to the means for selecting the
5 settings menu, means for selecting one of the functions in the settings menu;

communicatively coupled to the means for selecting one of the functions, means for requiring a verification input if the selected function corresponds to a personalized location and
10 for permitting a feature in the selected function to be activated if the verification input is valid;

communicatively coupled to the means for selecting one of the functions, means for permitting a feature in the selected function to be activated if the selected function does not
15 correspond to a personalized location; and

communicatively coupled to the means for permitting the feature, means for permitting input of a name for the activated feature and a directory path to an application associated with the activated feature if the activated feature
20 is a customizable feature.

32. A method of processing information in an interactive television system, the method comprising:

checking a settings table to determine active functions
25 and inactive functions, the active functions and the inactive

functions corresponding to associated locations in an
environment of the interactive television system;

displaying each active function;

selecting one of the active functions;

5 if the selected active function is a personalized
function corresponding to a personal location, then requiring
a verification input, and if the verification input is valid,
then displaying at least one active feature associated with
the selected active function;

10 if the selected active function is not a personalized
function, then displaying at least one active feature
associated with the selected active function; and
selecting at least one of the active features and
enabling an event associated with the selected active feature.

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33. An article of manufacture, comprising:

a machine-readable medium having stored thereon
instructions to:

check a settings table to determine active functions and
20 inactive functions, the active functions and the inactive
functions corresponding to associated locations in an
environment of the interactive television system;

display each active function;

select one of the active functions;

if the selected active function is a personalized
function corresponding to a personal location, then require a
verification input, and if the verification input is valid,
then display at least one active feature associated with the
5 selected active function;

if the selected active function is not a personalized
function, then display at least one active feature associated
with the selected active function; and

select at least one of the active features and enabling
10 an event associated with the selected active feature.

34. An apparatus for processing information in an interactive
television system, the apparatus comprising:

means for checking a settings table to determine active
15 functions and inactive functions, the active functions and the
inactive functions corresponding to associated locations in an
environment of the interactive television system;

communicatively coupled to the checking means, means for
displaying each active function;

20 communicatively coupled to the displaying means, means
for selecting one of the active functions;

communicatively coupled to the selecting means, means for
requiring a verification input if the selected active function
is a personalized function corresponding to a personal
25 location and for displaying at least one active feature

associated with the selected active function if the
verification input is valid;

communicatively coupled to the selecting means, means for
displaying at least one active feature associated with the
5 selected active function if the selected active function is
not a personalized function; and

communicatively coupled to the selecting means, means for
selecting at least one of the active features and for enabling
an event associated with the selected active feature.

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35. An apparatus for enabling a user interface in an
interactive television system, the apparatus comprising:

15 a set top box communicatively coupled to the display
device and capable to transmit television signals to a display
device, the set top box including a user interface engine
capable to display a function associated with a location in an
environment of the interactive television system;

20 the set top box further including a controller capable to
execute the user interface engine and to enable an event in
response to a selection of the function.

36. The apparatus of claim 35 wherein the function includes
at least one feature associated with the location.

37. The apparatus of claim 36 further comprising: an application associated with the feature, the controller executing the application in response to a selection of the feature.

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38. The apparatus of claim 36 wherein selection of the feature provides information associated with the selected feature.

10 39. The apparatus of claim 36 wherein the user interface engine is capable to check for a verification input if the selected function is associated with a restricted location.

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15 40. The apparatus of claim 36 wherein the user interface engine is capable to set a feature in active state or inactive state.

41. An apparatus for enabling a user interface in an interactive television system, the apparatus comprising:

20 a remote control device capable to transmit command signals;

a controller; and

a user interface engine executable by the controller in response to command signals from the remote control device to

permit access to a function associated with a location in an environment of the interactive television system.

42. The apparatus of claim 41 wherein the controller is
5 capable to trigger an event associated with the function in response to a selection of the function.

43. An apparatus for providing to a user of an interactive television system, a home style user interface that is
10 organized according to a plurality of the user's surrounding locations, the apparatus comprising:

a set top box including a storage capable to store information associated with each of a plurality of features, each feature associated with one of the plurality of
15 locations, the set top box further capable to receive and interpret a command signal and capable to format a television screen layout from the interpreted command signal and capable to transmit the television screen layout;

a television including a television screen, the
20 television communicatively coupled to the set top box and capable to receive the television screen layout from the set top box and capable to display the television screen layout on the television screen; and

a user input device communicatively coupled to the set
25 top box and capable to detect a user input and

capable to convert the user input into the command signal and transmit the command signal to the set top box.

44. The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the plurality of
5 locations is a plurality of rooms in a building.

45. The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the plurality of locations is a plurality of rooms in a dwelling.

10 46. The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the information associated with each feature includes indicia of whether the feature is active or inactive.

47. The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the set top box is
15 further capable to update the indicia of whether the feature is active or inactive based upon the command signal received from the user input device.

48. The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the information
20 associated with each feature includes information about an executable application that is invoked when the feature is active and when the user selects the feature.

49. The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the set top box is
25 further capable to update the information about an executable

application based upon the command signal received from the user input device.

50. The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the set top box storage
5 is further capable to store a name associated with one of the locations.

51. The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the set top box is
further capable to update the name associated with the
10 location.

52. The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the set top box storage
is further capable to store indicia of whether at least one of
the plurality of locations is password protected.

53. The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the set top box storage
is further capable to store a password associated with one of
the plurality of locations.

54. The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the set top box is
further capable to provide user access to each of the
plurality of features associated with one of the plurality of
locations that is password protected, if the interpretation of
the command signal received from the user input device results

in a determination that the user has entered the password associated with the one of the plurality of locations.

55. The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the information

5 associated with each of a plurality of features is stored in a settings table comprising a plurality of table entries, each table entry associated with one of the plurality of features and further associated with one of the plurality of locations.

10 56. The apparatus of claim 43 wherein: the set top box is further capable to:

determine which of the plurality of features are active;
and

15 format the television screen layout to include features of the plurality of features that are active.

57. The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the set top box is further capable to:

20 determine which features of the plurality of features are associated with one of the plurality of locations;

determine which features of the plurality of features associated with the one of the plurality of locations are active; and

format a television screen layout including those features associated with the one of the plurality of locations that are also active.

- 5 58. A method of providing a home-style user interface to a user of an interactive television system, the method comprising:

displaying at least one active feature associated with one of a plurality of the user's surrounding locations;

- 10 accepting user input including a selection of one of the at least one active feature; and

invoking an executable application associated with the selected active feature.

- 15 59. The method of claim 58, further comprising:

displaying indicia of each of the plurality of locations that has at least one associated active feature; and

- 20 accepting user input including a selection of indicia for one of the plurality of locations that has at least one associated active feature;

and wherein:

the displaying of the indicia of each of the plurality of active features comprises displaying each active feature associated with the selected one of the locations.

60. An article of manufacture, comprising:

a machine-readable medium having stored thereon
instructions to:

display at least one active feature associated with one
5 of a plurality of a interactive television system user's
everyday surroundings;

accept user input including a selection of one of the at
least one active feature; and

invoke an executable application associated with the
10 selected active feature.

61. The article of manufacture of claim 61 wherein the
machine-readable medium having stored thereon instructions:
further comprises instructions to:

15 display indicia of each of the plurality of locations
that has at least one associated active feature; and

accept user input including a selection of indicia for
one of the plurality of locations that has at least one
associated active feature; and

20 wherein the instruction to display of the plurality of
active features comprises an instruction to display each
active feature associated with the selected one of the
locations.

62. An apparatus for providing a home-style user interface to a user of an interactive television system, the apparatus comprising:

means for displaying at least one active feature

5 associated with one of a plurality of the user's surrounding locations;

communicatively coupled to the display means, means for selecting one of the at least one active feature; and

communicatively coupled to the selection means, means for
10 invoking an executable application associated with the selected active feature.

63. A method of customizing a home-style user interface provided for a user of an interactive television system, the
15 method comprising:

storing a status indicator for each of at least one feature associated with one of a plurality of the user's surrounding locations, the status indicator including information about whether the feature is active or inactive;

20 displaying setup indicia associated with the feature, the setup indicia including the status indicator information about whether the feature is active or inactive;

selecting the setup indicia associated with the feature;
and

updating the status indicator for the feature from active to inactive, or from inactive to active.

64. An article of manufacture, comprising:

5 a machine-readable medium having stored thereon instructions to:

store a status indicator for each of at least one feature associated with one of a plurality of an interactive television system user's surrounding locations, the status indicator including information about whether the feature is active or inactive;

display setup indicia associated with the feature, the setup indicia including the status indicator information about whether the feature is active or inactive;

15 accept user input including a selection of the setup indicia associated with the feature; and

update the status indicator for the feature from active to inactive, or from inactive to active.

20 65. An apparatus for providing a home-style user interface to a user of an interactive television system, the apparatus comprising:

means for storing a status indicator for each of at least one feature associated with one of a plurality of the user's

